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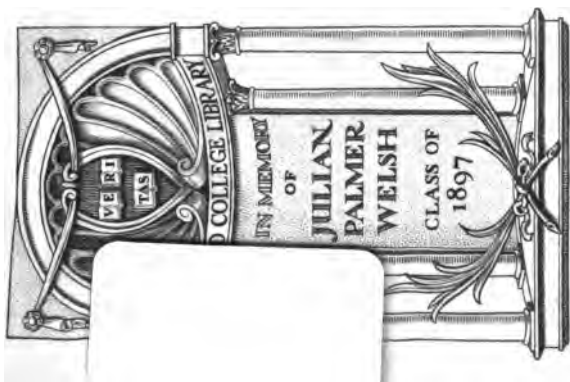
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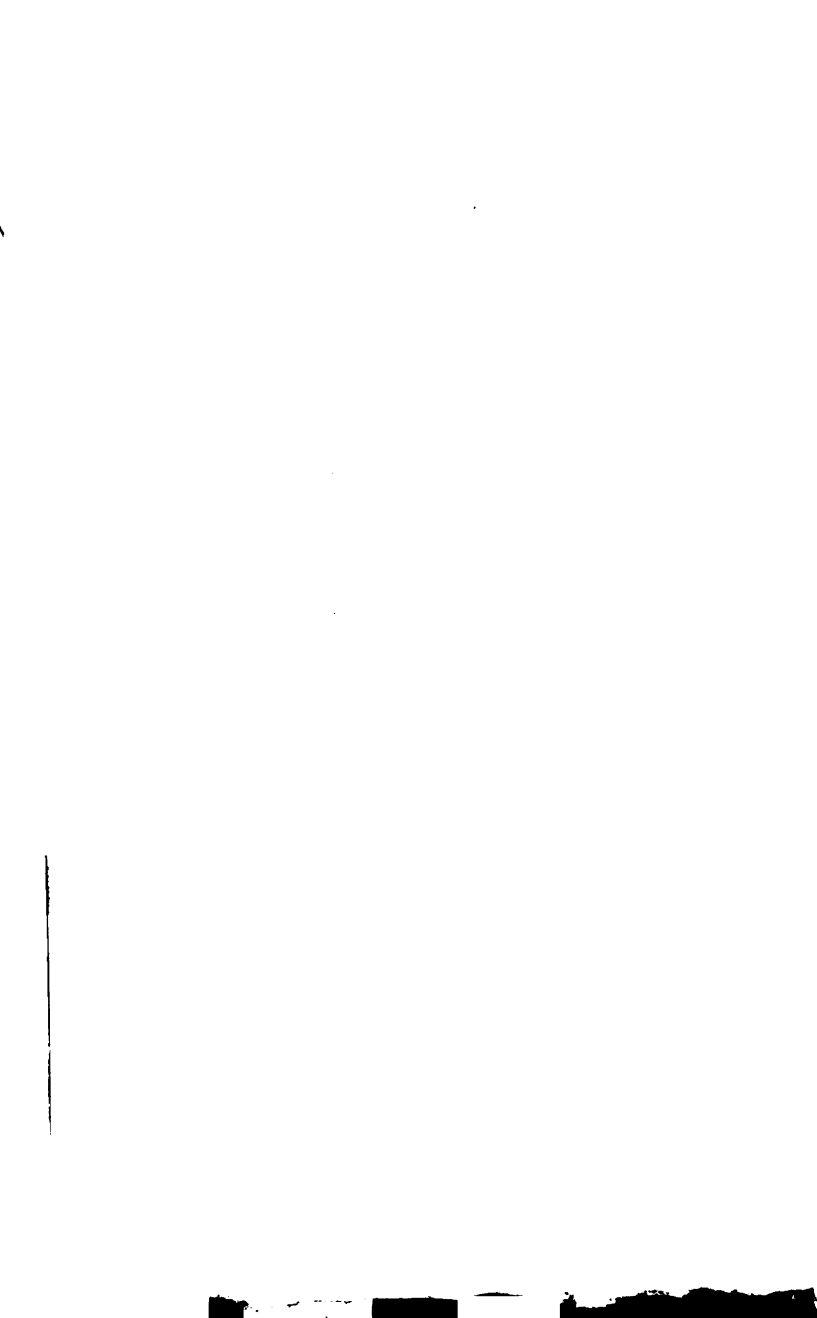


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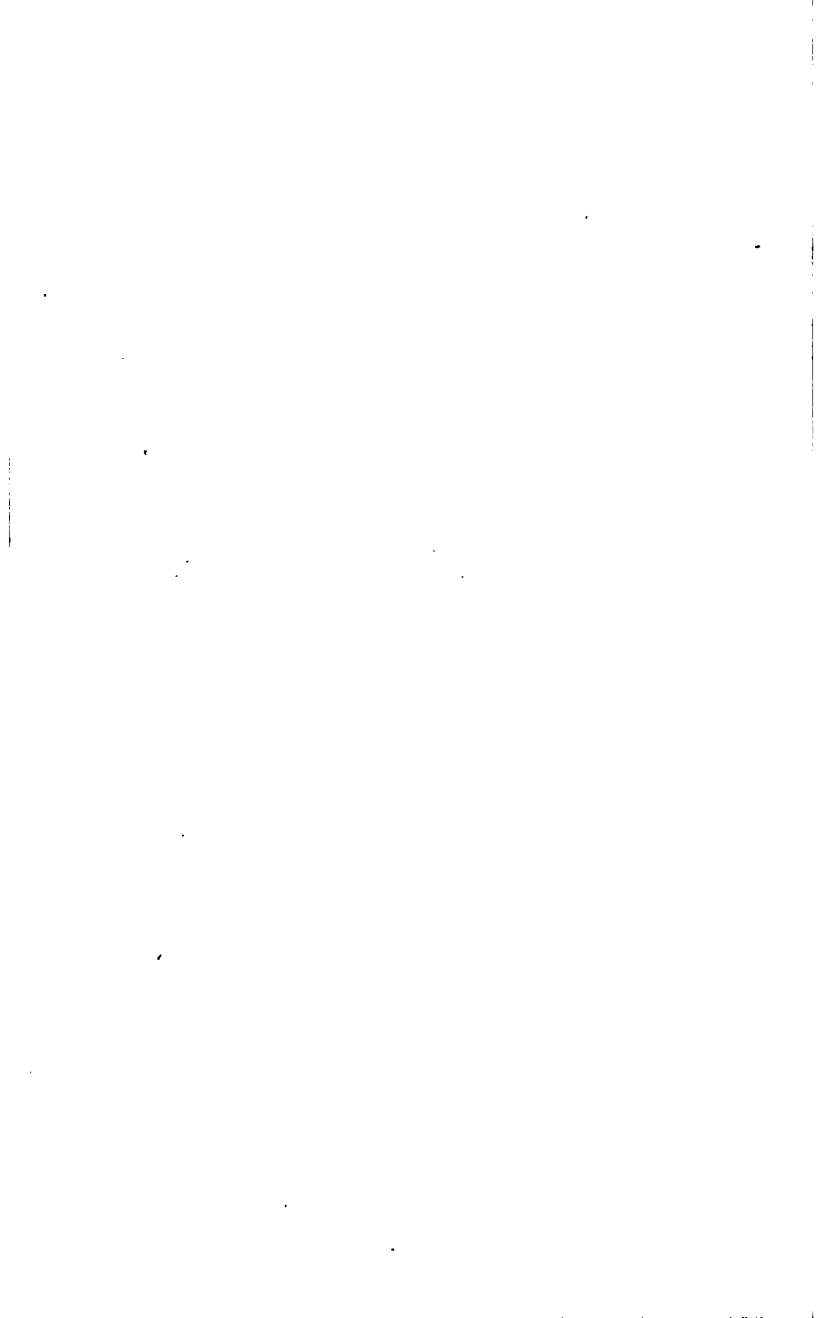
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VERSES



VERSES

BY

ELIZABETH WATERHOUSE

*Poma nova & vetera, dilecte mi,
servavi tibi*

Published by THOMAS HAWKINS
NEWBURY

1897

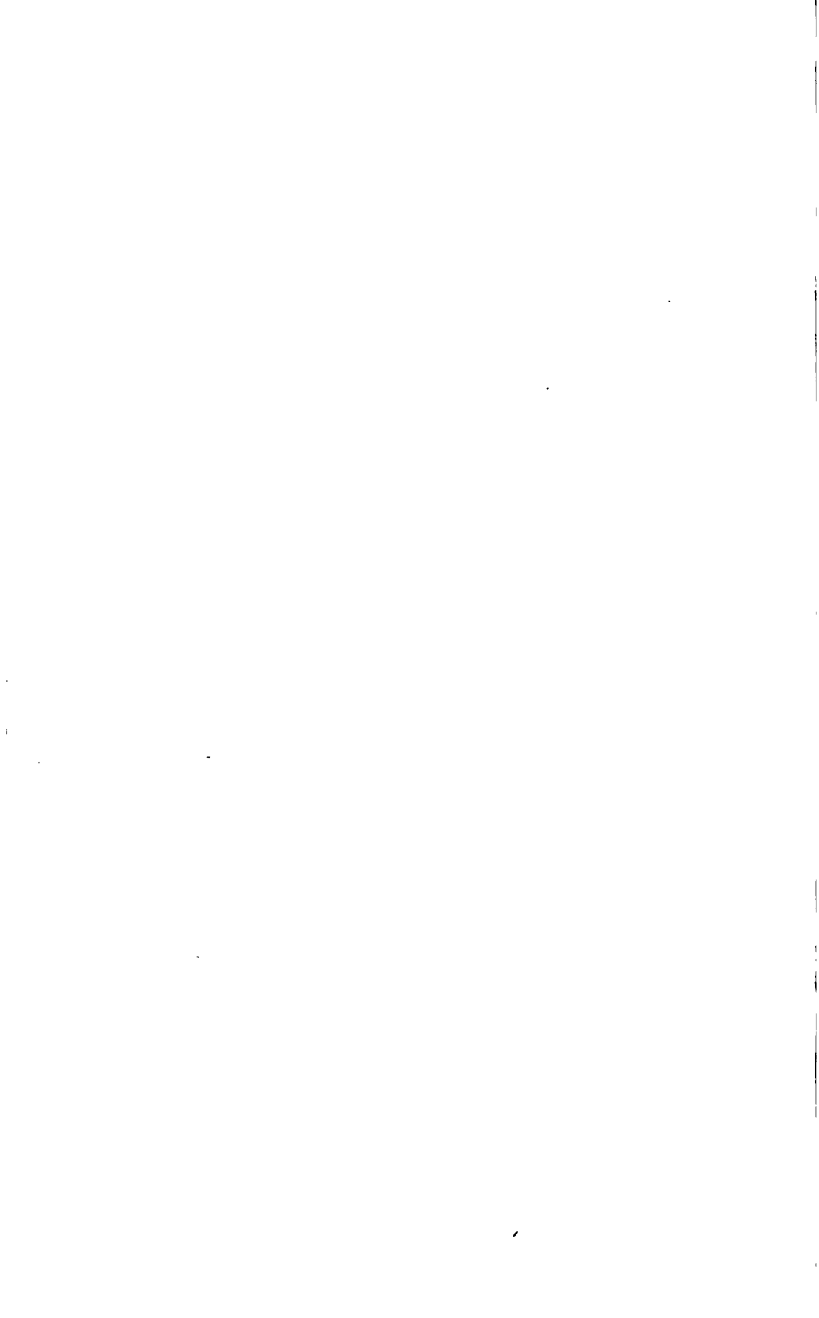
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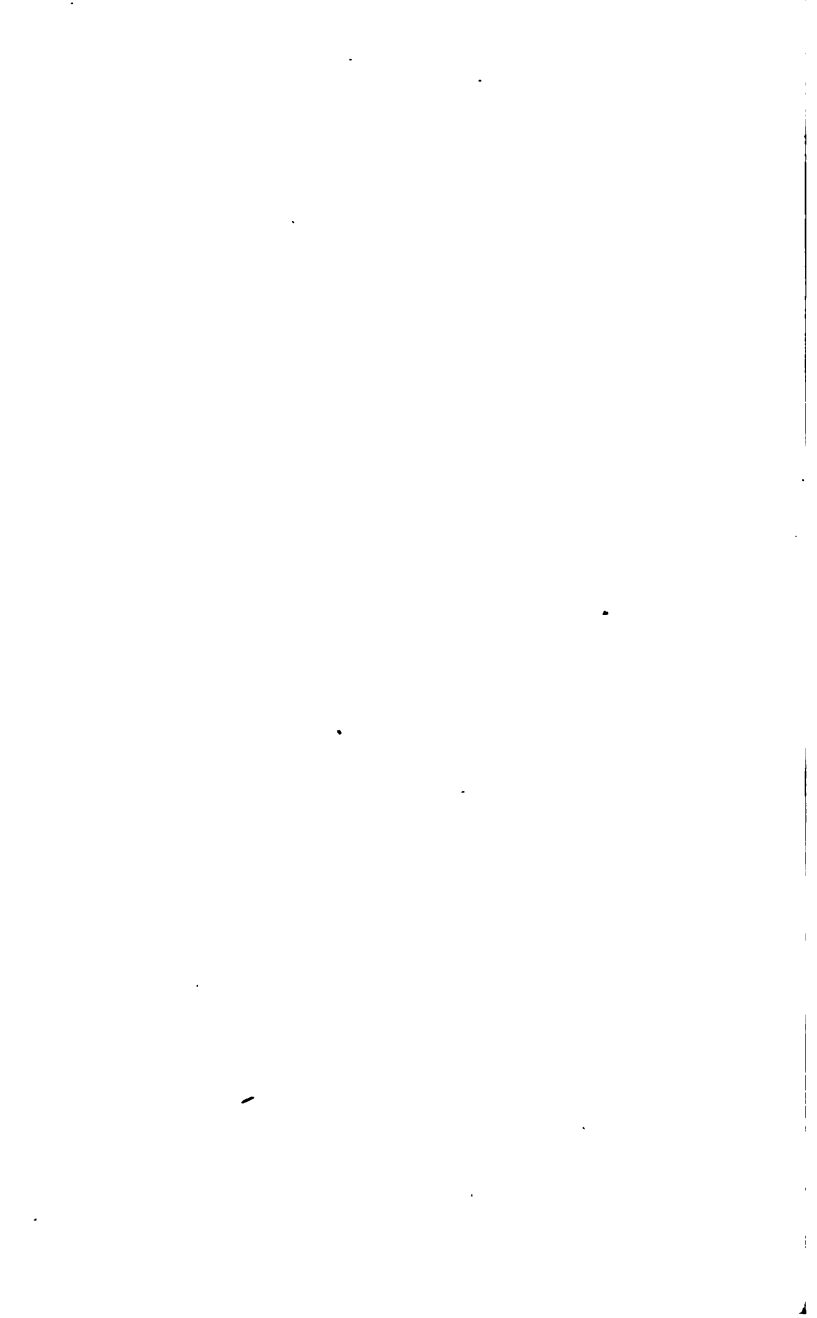
*Chiswick Press:—Charles Whittingham & Co.
Tooks Court, Chancery Lane, London.*

CARISSIMIS



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SEA AND SHORE

WHEN we two passed the other eve
Through golden moonlight, hand in hand,
Along the sandy margin set
For twilight space 'twixt sea & land,

*The possible delight of life
Unmeasured as the broad bright sea,
And bounded as the sand we trod
Its narrow turmoil seemed to me ;*

*But when thy smile had passed away,
Nor in thy hand mine rested more,
Life's boundless trouble seemed the wave,
Its narrow bliss the bounded shore.*

OLD LEAVES.

CRISP-whispering fly on the warm west wind's
wing

*With shivering sigh, the saddest voice of Spring,
The few late leaves from last year lingering.*

*Foolishly faithful in wild wintry nights,
When sudden storms blew out the starry lights
And the cold flakes came up in feathery flights.*

*Foolishly faithful, all their beauty gone,
All their young wooing softness changed & wan,
With nothing left for love to linger on.*

*Foolishly fond, till one warm hour revealed
Where the young leaf-buds blushing lay concealed,
And one swift sting the year-long clasp unsealed.*

*“ Old leaves, old loves ”—so some one seems to say
About my window this warm, wistful day
Above the violets—is it I or they?*

DISTANCES.

S*OMETIMES there seems to shine
On distant hill-tops clear
A future, thine and mine
Made one, my only dear.*

*But, dear, the Shepherds say
When all the uplands shine
Distinct, though far away,
Storms follow swift the sign.*

*So, when there seems to shine
That future fair & clear,
For thy sake & for mine
I weep—my only dear.*

INCENSE.

OUTSIDE the Church's western door I lingered
by the way,
I heard no sound of Sanctus bell, the chant had died
away,
And round the porch the Acolytes were merry in
their play,
Yet knew I by the incens'd air
' Here had been the voice of prayer.

So, dearest Lord, be all my life breathed round about
by Thee,
When at Thy feet a little while I have knelt
blessedly,

*That those who meet me by the way may rather feel
than see
“ If God be prayed to anywhere
This soul hath been in prayer.”*

THREE PARABLES.

I.

I *WAS* not resolute in heart and will
To rise up suddenly & seek Thy Face,
Leaving the swine-husks in the desert place,
And crying, "I have sinned, receive me still!"

II.

*I could not even at the Shepherd's voice
Startle & thrill, with yearnings for the fold,
Till He should take me in His blessed hold,
And lay me on His shoulder and rejoice.*

III.

*But lying silent, will-less in the dark,
A little piece of silver, lost from Thee,
I only knew Thy Hands were seeking me
And that I bore through all Thy heavenly mark.*

AN ECLIPSE.

DARK world, sad heart in silent sympathy!
What matters it if both are in the shade?
The stars will steal out soon
And with the wide white moon,
Who walks the endless ether unafraid,
Will tread together gladly up the sky
And not be any whit the dimmer made.

Dim heart & world! sad world & sadder heart,
What matters it if both are dark to-night?
If down thy trouble deep
No gleam of comfort creep,
If sin or sorrow shut thee from the light?
God's happy ones, though thou dost mourn apart,
Will not be any whit less glad & white.

*So said I to the midnight & my soul,
Soothing myself with bitter hermit-hood,
When up the opal East,
Not white-robed for a feast,
But shrunken & scarred & stained as if with blood,
Shyly along a darkened path she stole,
The maiden Moon above the elmen wood.*

*Darkened with what? No little veil of dew,
No cloud-lamb pasturing in fields of air
Flecks with a passing shade
The pathway of the maid,
Who else, to-night, were perfect-orbed & fair;
But the world's shadow, like an arrow true,
Hath struck her with a strange & new despair.*

*O Shadow of my heart, the heavenly stairs
Grow dim where thou art cast perhaps to-night;
The soul thou lovest best
May miss some footing blest
On the great Ladder of the Infinite.
Ah me! how often & how unawares
We come between God's creatures & His light!*

EASTER EVE.

I *WAS* weeping just before moonset,
Set of the Easter moon,
Though I knew that the morning of mornings
Would thrill & awaken soon.

*I was weeping just before moonset,
At the hour of the waking of birds,
When two of God's angels spoke to me
In sweet compassionate words:*

*"Woman, why art thou weeping?"
And I answered, nothing afraid,
"Because they have taken away my Lord,
And I know not where He is laid.*

*"They have taken Him from the valleys,
Where I loved to follow His feet,
Seeing their print in the tender grass
And finding His lilies sweet.*

*"They have taken Him from my garden,
Where I used to walk & say,
'The Lord hath been down to my garden
And made a flower to-day.'*

*"They have taken Him from the mountains
And tops of the happy hills,
Where He used to drop the dew down
To plenisb the pleasant rills.*

*"They have taken Him from His cloud-land,
From thunder & thunder-shower,
From the rain He sent for the springing grass
And shine for the harvest hour.*

*" For all things are set and ordered
And parts of a great machine,
In which the hand of the Maker
Would tremble to intervene.*

*" And He could not save one petal
From a destined drop of rain,
Without unbuilding His universe
And building it up again.*

*" So now I can pray no longer
The prayers that once I prayed,
For they have taken away my Lord,
And I know not where He is laid."*

*Thus weeping just before moonset,
In the hour of the waking of birds,
I was 'ware of Another who spoke to me
In sweet compassionate words:*

*"Woman, why art thou weeping?"
And I spoke, not lifting my eyes,
"If thou have taken away my Lord,
O tell me where He lies."*

*But into His voice as He answered
Came a music all Divine—
One word, one name, He uttered,
The word, the name, was mine.*

*Then I knew it could not be another,
But my Lord with voice so sweet,
I knew it all in a moment
And I strove to clasp His feet.*

*I knew, for that one word told me
That they could not bear away
My Christ, my King, my Master,
From the place where once He lay.*

*'Tis He, who would bid me seek Him
Not painfully here & there,
But standing close beside me,
Always & everywhere.*

*Always—O Christ the Risen!
The moongleam fadeth fleet,
But the flush of Thine Easter Sunrise
Finds one more soul at Thy feet.*

A CHILD'S THOUGHT.

I *F I had lived in Bethlehem
And known where Jesus lay
Within the wooden manger
On a little bed of hay,
The new-born baby Jesus,
That earliest Christmas day,*

*How gladly had I taken,
With earliest dawning light,
The little pillow from my bed
And sheets of snowy white.*

*And through the streets of Bethlehem
I quickly should have run,*

*And stood before that stable-door
At rising of the Sun.*

*And knocking softly at the door
With earnest voice should say,
"Wake up, wake up, good Joseph,
This happy Christmas Day,
And let me in to see the babe
That's cradled on the hay."*

*I should have said, "O Mary blest,
Behold I quickly bring
A pillow & two little sheets
To make a soft bedding
For the new-born baby Jesus,
Who is my Lord & King."*

*I think good Joseph quickly
Would have let me through the door,
And there among the sheep & cows
I should have knelt before*

*That holy, fairest baby
That ever mother bore.*

*I should have said upon my knees,
"The finest I can bring
Is all too coarse to make a bed
For Thee, my Lord & King,
Yet wilt Thou take, for Love's own sake,
Love's poorest offering."*

*Such words a little child said
Upon his mother's knee
One happy Christmas morning,
But nothing answered she.*

*She looked out still & sadly
Across the winter snow,
She watched the pale blue shadows
Of the bare trees come & go
As the North wind made the branches
Rock softly to & fro.*

*She thought how Christ the Saviour,
Still waiting day by day,
Is still as poorly tended
As when a bed of hay
Made all the soft enfolding
In the manger where He lay.*

*Pure thoughts & holy longings
Like linen fair & white,
And hearts of softest tenderness
Like downy pillow light,
With these we still should meet Him
At each day's dawning bright.*

*Yet still our Lord is waiting
At many a close-barred door—
For pure & holy worship,
For tending of His poor,
For all the gentle ministry
Of Love from Love's own store.*

*She thought how surely, surely
To each one comes the day,
When we are bid to waken
And rise & put away
Some ease or sweetness for His sake,
Who came on Christmas Day.*

*But she only said, " My darling,
There still is work to do
For the blessed baby Jesus
Who lived, a child for you.
But come, the bells are ringing
And we must praise Him too."*

TO MY APRIL CHILD.

BABY, my Baby, thus I croon to thee,
Thou dearest blossom of the April tide;
Speak with me soul to soul a little while,
For I am tired & the world is wide.

Speak soul to soul, thou hast no words as yet
To wrap thy heart up in & hide it so.
Ah me! with every lesson that we learn,
How much that is more blessed we forego.

A little while, the world runs faster now
Than when a mother all day long might sit
Spinning at once fair dreams & snowy threads
Beside her baby's cradle, rocking it.

And I am tired—*tired of myself :*

*Thou only with those love-taught eyes of thine
Beholdest through this brittle, cloudy glass
A type which is eternal and divine.*

The world is wide, *so wide & yet so full*

*Of hearts that do not care for thee or me.
Ah well! just lay thy cheek there on my breast
And we can say, "God help them, let them be."*

So while the hot noon rests upon the world,

*Thou dearest blossom of the April tide,
Speak soul to soul a little while with me,
For I am tired & the world is wide.*

THE CHOICE OF PARIS.

(Written at the beginning of the Siege of Paris, 1870.)

O PARIS! thou too hadst thy threefold choice,
As had that other upon Ida's height—
Stern Strength, self ruling Wisdom, soft Delight,
But Aphrodite's was the sweetest voice.

So hover Strength & Wisdom scorned of thee
Above the standard of thy fateful foe,
Whose blue battalions in unceasing flow
Are surging round thee like an angry sea.

Too late thou risest to put swiftly on
Thy rusting armour at the trumpet's call,
There shines already on thy leaguered wall
A doomful glare, like flames of Iliou.

THE PEACE. 1871.

"I HAVE made peace, thank God." O Emperor
King,
At this thy word the nations lift their eyes,
Looking for One they wot of to arise
White-robed, on happy wing.

What do they see? There crouches at thy heel
A sullen Thing with vengeance in her face,
Writhing & wroth, but fettered to her place
By bonds of German steel.

As one should tell us in the dim thick night—
"Behold the dawn!" and we looked forth to see
The whole wide East grow golden silently
With joy of coming light,

*And saw instead a line of cloudy flame
And lightning flashes leaping swift therethrough,
And heard the muffled thunder-pulse & knew
The storm, not morning, came.*

*So is it when each wiry nerve to-day
Of eager Europe thrills with that sweet word,
Sweet yet so false, soon as its sound is heard
Its promise dies away.*

*Thy God of Battles, whom we do not know,
Thank for the Rhinelands & the golden fleece,
But not for such poor truce the Christ of Peace—
His Peace He gives not so.*

LOVE AND TIME.

WAITING for Love the other morn
Beside my sunny orchard wall,
Across the dial, mossed and worn,
I watched the early shadow fall.
“Ah me!” I sighed, “so glides the day,
So Love, who comes, will pass away.”

Just then below me in the dew
Where slants the orchard valley deep,
Time's busy scythe was whistling through
The after-grass in steady sweep.
“Ah me!” I cried, “were Time away
Love when he comes would always stay.”

*" Oh mower of my late delight!
Oh robber of the golden hours!
I'll cover up from Love's dear sight
Thy dial-shade with scented flowers,
And, heeding not the fleeting day,
Love in my garden still shall stay."*

*Then from the Southern border, full
Of all sweet roses autumn blown,
A cluster was I swift to cull
And heap them on the dial stone:
The shadow crept to where they lay
As Love came down the orchard way.*

*All in the drowsy afternoon
Love talked with me through languid hours,
And slow, as in a weary swoon,
Time's shade crept on beneath the flowers,
And few the words that Love did say
And passing sad he seemed away.*

*Weary of all things Love me seemed,
He laid him in the scented grass
And murmured still as if he dreamed
Of time to come & time that was,
For Love doth love to build, they say,
To-morrow out of yesterday.*

*But Time was leaning on his scythe
And gazed upon me standing near,
"Are then the hours of Love more blithe
When my swift sweep they cannot bear?
The shade had marked a sweeter day,
Poor heart, were all thy flowers away!"*

*And then he called the little breeze
With which he makes the ripe fruit fall,
And bade it lift my red roses
And heap them by the orchard wall,
And cried, "O Love! awake! away!
Behold how swiftly falls the day."*

*And Love arose with gayer cheer
And, looking on the low-cast shaae,
He said, "Too long I linger here,"
And strode, swift stepping down the glade.
I did not seek to say him nay—
For weary Love is best away.*

CLEMATIS.

O *FAIR* tree bending over
The hedgerow where I rise,
Know you the lowly lover
Who looks with faithful eyes
Up to your boughs that cover
My space of summer skies?

*My wistful tendrils winding
Seek always up to you,
Beyond you broadens blinding
The whole of Heaven's blue—
Enough shines for my finding
Your leafy roofing through.*

*Thus day by day repeating
My simple round of care,
I'm day by day completing
One upward winding stair—
My growth is my entreating,
I live my faithful prayer.*

*Heaven & the high stars teach you
Secrets by me unguessed,
I for no grace beseech you
To stir your mystic rest,
For though I may not reach you
To seek you is my best.*

VILLARS SUR OLLON

WINDS on this mountain meadow
 Bear whispers to and fro
Of cool blue clefts of shadow
 Under the shelves of snow,
And of vineyard steep
Where the lizard sleeps
 In warm lands below,
And their songs seem
Like a lost dream
 I dreamt a life ago.

And whether the crystal coolness
 They tell of on the height,
Or Autumn's fecund fullness
 In lowlands of delight,

*Be the sweetest thing
The breezes sing,
Heart, thou canst not say;
For their songs seem
Like a lost dream
I dreamt a world away.*

IN ENNA.

PERSEPHONE, around whose feet
The meadow grasses cling & throng,
Was there no other flower so sweet
As this of poet's song
That led thee from thy mother's hand
The laughing plains along?

So meet it seemed for maiden wreath.
How couldst thou guess? thou didst not see
That long as life & strong as death
Its slender root would be,
And when thy fingers gathered it
Love's arms would gather thee.

THE SONG OF THE COLOURS.

(For an Air of Mozart.)

G*OLD of the king-cup, gold of the sheaves,
Gold of the light through lattice of leaves;
Blue of the mountain, blue of the sea,
Blue of the bright air, sing to me.
Life is a garden, love-shielded from sadness,
Rose-walls around it, by warm winds o'er-blown.
Beryl of barley-waves in June,
Opal of moonrise, O sing soon
A song of the garden of gladness.*

O my own!

*Brown of the beech that mourns alone,
Brown of the larch by late winds frown,*

*Brown of the bracken frayed & toft,
Sing to me sadly, "Love is loft."
Life is a moorland where wild winds awaken,
Locked from Love's garden my heart makes her moan.*

*Black of the moonset, black of the cloud,
Black of the midnight, sing, sing loud
The song of a soul forsaken.*

O my own!

*White of the foam-fleck, white of the snow,
White of the furnace all aglow,
White of the lily, white of the dove,
Sing of a whole world built of Love.
Life is a path that grows greener for wending,
Lovers may fail us, Love lasteth alone.*

*Red of the sunset, red of the rose,
Sing me the song that no man knows,
The Song of a Love never ending.*

O my own!

SLEEP AT DAWN.

DOWN the long dark I lie awake,
Beloved, for thy tender sake
Forecasting lest some chance of ill
Thy happy dream should unfulfil;
When on the Southern upland lies
The Scorpion with his shining eyes,
And through the many-nested trees
The stars shine thick as hiving bees,
For thee my soul hath strife of prayer,
With folded hands, awake, aware,
Till thy dawn comes, darling.

But when from off the Southern mist
The shining Scorpion bath uprises,
When white inflowings of the day

*Have washt from Heaven the milky way,
When from the beds of waking streams
Pass in pale troops their fading dreams,
When each glad bird that leaves his nest
Shrills a "Venite" to the rest,
When winds of morning bathe my brow,
I sleep, thou wilt not need me now,
When thy dawn comes, darling.*

OUT OF THE PAST.

With a book of old Rhymes. To My Child.

I HAVE wandered far away
For a gift to thee,
Into an old dead day
Where phantoms be,
Into an island set
In a wide, sad sea,
Whose shores the long waves fret
Unceasingly.

*And under a waning moon
When the dawn delayed,
Late for thee, love, & soon
In that land I strayed;*

*Herbs of the shifting sand
That the salt winds fade,
Bound with Love for a band
This Garland made.*

*Sere & scentless & hoar
Are the flowers of my wreath,
Frayed with the scud of the shore
And the sharp storm's teeth,
But the riband of Love hath not known
The harsh brine's breath—
It is brighter than Life, my own,
And stronger than Death.*

POLURRIAN.

MY ear is weary of the *West Sea's* roar
Where all night long its white teeth tear
the shore,
Waking me sbrilly from a dream of fear
That some huge hideous beast is ravening near.

*My eyes are tired of the steep cliff's side
And gray-green headlands hollowed of the tide,
And even of the swift, sun-smitten spray
And Michael's fairy Mount across the bay.*

'Tis that the *Hunter Care* has found me here,
Whither I fled for shelter from his spear,
And his wild cry & white stare seem to me
The thunder & the flashing of the sea.

THE WHEELWRIGHT.

M*Y home is on a pleasant hill
Where pine & cedar sigh,
Where strong winds bend the oaks at will
And howl & hurry by;
And one red tower drinks its fill
Out of the sunset sky.*

*Among the oaks in acorn days
The shining rooks carouse,
The squirrel chuckles as he plays
And skims the topmost boughs,
While on the slope the heifers graze
And furtive rabbits browse.*

*Beneath the bill, where curls the smoke,
A wheelwright has his shed,
I hear his heavy hammer-stroke
From dawn till western red,
And carts he builds for living folk
And coffins for the dead.*

*Once, as I passed, the wheelwright good
Raised from a smouldering fire
To fling about a wheel of wood
A red-hot rounded tire,
While near him wife & children stood
To help him or admire.*

*And when my pulses gaily glide,
Hearing his blows, I say,
"He builds a curved wagon wide
For bringing home the hay,
Where also laughing girls shall ride
Abroad on holiday."*

*But when the tides of life are low
And pestilence is bred,
When under village roofs I know
That sick folk lie a-bed,
I say, "He makes a coffin so
For one who'll soon be dead."*

A NEW WORLD.

LO, with what care Columbus wrought
To find fair isles beyond the sea—
But now a new world all unsought
Across the cowslips comes to me.

*A new Atlantis floats to me
Frothed with the surf of April woods,
And shrinking on the shore I see
The children of their solitudes.*

*Shy thoughts & dusky dreams of dreams :
"Come near, come near, & speak," I cry,
"Bring water from your winding streams,
Bring fruits & viands lest I die."*

*In vain.—Before their gifts I hold,
Great seas of dark green Summer rise;
And bear me on their manifold
Warm waves away to alien skies.*

*Another Spring? 'tis idly said;
Mine are not many yet to come,
But where the April world is made
I hope one day to build my home.*

To M.



I.

IN WINTER.

IN windy winter, O my love, my love,
I seek the spot where most I think of thee,
When no blue breaks the windy murk above,
And no bird sings upon the straining tree.

For then thy grave, where now no petals fall,
The sodden churchyard, & the stormy tide,
Yea, all that is, seems but a great gray wall
With shining summer on the other side.

Yes, shining summer in a perfect place,
And thou, my beautiful, art standing there—
I cannot see the splendour of thy face,
Nor guess the new-lit glory of thy hair ;

*But one day, surely, dear, a little door
In this gray wall will open, thou wilt come
And I shall look upon thy smile once more,
And thou wilt take my hand & lead me home.*

II.
IN SUMMER.

LIGHT that I love the best!
Dear, thy spirit hath guessed
That it is not the strong swift splendour,
Banner of Day's surrender
On turret clouds of the West;

Nor the wide, white whisper, "Soon
Comes our Lady the Moon!"
Which when the sad stars hearken
They cower & quail & darken
Low at her silver shoon.

Not the keen leaping line,
Topaz or opaline,

*Or sudden sapphire, brightening
The world's edge with low lightening
When stars care not to shine.*

*But the lingering light that lies
In the North when a long day dies,
Binding with pearlen thread
Sorrow for one day dead,
To hope for the day that shall rise.*

*"Behold, behold," it would say,
"Thy Joy hath passed this way
Over the round world's rim;
Lean thou & look for him,
He comes with dawn of day."*

*"Behold, behold," it saith,
"Spirit that sorroweth,
The smile of the Well-Beloved,
But for a space removed
Over the edge of death."*

*No dim & wandering quest,
No far hope faintly guessed,
But a night-long tenderest token,
A word that is almost spoken,
This light that I love the best.*

THE YOUNGEST CHILD.

WHEN thou art old, go forth some azure day,
Leaving thy children at their grave employ,
Thy grandchildren at play,
And, seeking with slow feet
Some quiet woodland seat,
Forget all cares that could thy peace annoy,
And take thy joy
This way.

Be sure no keen airs through the branches come,
Nor beam too scorching pierce them overhead,
And let the wild bees hum,
The squirrels laughing cry,
And flap of wings on high

*Be all the sounds that to thy ear are sped,
All others fled
Or dumb.*

*There fold by fold unwrap the garb of years
In which it is thy wont to go
Disguised among thy peers,
Disrobe thee till thou win
Within, within, within
The little Child whose joy they cannot know,
Or, be it so,
Its tears.*

*A little Child, grieved by a rose-thorn smart
And by a rose, a bird, a toy beguiled
With foolish, childish heart.
There with that self unchanged,
But all too long estranged,
For one short hour of play be reconciled
And be the Child
Thou art.*



*Chiswick Press:—Charles Whittingham & Co.
Tooks Court, Chancery Lane, London.*







